

UTAH CHILD OUTDOOR RECREATION DEATHS

- Utah's diverse and popular outdoor recreation areas were the sites of a significant portion (8%) of the 508 injury-related child and teen fatalities from 2002-2004.
- Of the 49 victims, 40 were male, 9 were female, and two of the victims were injured at an early age and died later from their injuries.
- Five (10%) of the victims were ages 0-4, four (8%) were ages 5-9, 12 (25%) were ages 10-14 and 28, and 28 (57%) were ages 15-19.
- The majority of the deaths occurred in off-road crashes, drownings and hiking falls.



Children Ages 0-19, 2002-2004

OFF-ROAD DEATHS

Deaths from all-terrain vehicle (ATV) rollovers and crashes accounted for 17 of the 49 fatalities (41%). Another three children, none of whom were wearing seat belts, died in off-road crashes involving 4-wheel drive vehicles. All 20 victims were white, non-Hispanic.

Nationally, in 2001, 97% of children 16 and under who were injured on ATVs were riding machines larger than the manufacturers' recommendations for their ages.²

Drivers

- Thirteen of the 20 victims were operating the ATV. All were ages 10-19.
- Nine of the drivers were ages 16 and under.
- Twelve were male, one was female.
- Only five of the victims were known to be wearing a helmet. Two of those helmets fell off during the crash, either because they were too large for the rider or they weren't strapped on securely.
- At least one driver had an OHV operator's certificate and two had valid Utah driver licenses.

Passengers

- Of the seven passenger victims, the youngest was just three years old.
- Six victims were male, one was female
- Three victims were riding with intoxicated drivers when the crash occurred.

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OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES

Activities included in this fact sheet took place in mountain or desert areas, or open body/natural water settings. Typical activities included riding ATVs, hiking, swimming, camping and horseback riding.

OUTDOOR SAFETY TIPS

ATV/OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES

1. Always wear the right size helmet when riding off-highway vehicles, including ATVs and snowmobiles.
2. Make sure the helmet is strapped on securely.
3. Wear protective gear like gloves, over-the-ankle boots and goggles.
4. Have your children take the Utah Department of Parks and Recreation OHV training course.
5. Allow children to ride only ATVs that are appropriate for their age.
6. Never carry passengers on an ATV designed for one rider.
7. Don't drive or ride an ATV when under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
8. Don't operate ATVs on paved roads. The soft tires make them prone to rolling over on smooth surfaces.

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DROWNING DEATHS (continued from front page)

- Child drowning deaths occurred in rivers, lakes, reservoirs, streams and ponds.
- None of the victims were wearing a personal flotation device (PFD).
- There were a total of 13 victims ranging in age from four to 19.
- Four (31%) were ages 11 and younger.
- The vast majority were white, non-Hispanic.
- Twelve victims were male, 1 was female.
- Younger victims were often on family outings and slipped away while those who were supposed to be supervising them were distracted.
- Teens accounted for 69% of victims and were generally involved in activities with friends when the drowning occurred.
- Teen victims were often thought to be joking when they were calling for help, so rescue attempts were not made in time.
- The data are incomplete, but it does not appear that drugs or alcohol were involved in any of the drownings.

FALL-RELATED DEATHS

- Of the 6 victims, 4 were male, 2 were female.
- All fall victims were teen hikers between the ages of 14 and 18.
- All of the victims were hiking with others when the fall occurred.
- The victims fell from heights ranging from 30 to 1,000 feet.

OTHER

- Ten outdoor recreation deaths occurred by various other mechanisms, including:
 - * Falls from horses
 - * Avalanches
 - * Skiing incidents
 - * Vehicle backovers at campgrounds

References

1. All Utah outdoor recreation injury data are from the Utah Child Fatality Review Committee.
2. Consumer Federation of America. Accessed at <http://www.consumerfed.org/releases2.cfm?filename=atv-safety-crisis082003.txt> on Sept. 7, 2006.
3. Utah Department of Health Indicator-based Information System (IBIS).
4. New Hampshire Fish and Game Dept. Accessed at http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Outdoor_Recreation/hiking_safety.htm on September 7, 2006.
5. JAMA, February, 2006. Accessed at <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/295/8/919> on September 7, 2006.

OUTDOOR SAFETY TIPS

(continued from front page)

Water Safety

- Everyone in the family should learn to swim. Most children are ready at age 4 or later.
- Never swim alone in outdoor water settings.
- Wear a personal flotation device.
- Swim when you are not too tired or too cold, and only when you've not had too much sun or strenuous activity.
- Avoid water-related activities like swimming while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Learn CPR and have your children learn it, too.
- Teenage boys are at high risk of drowning outdoors because they tend to think they can swim farther than their actual ability. Teach boys that showing off in the water could kill them.

Hiking Safety/Fall Prevention⁴

- **Knowledge and gear:** Before you head out on a hike, learn all you can about the terrain, conditions, local weather and your equipment ahead of time.
- **Leave your plans:** Tell someone where you are going, the trails you are hiking, when you'll return and your emergency plans.
- **Stay together:** When you start as a group, hike as a group and end as a group. Pace your hike to the slowest person.
- **Turning back:** Weather changes quickly in the mountains. Fatigue and unexpected conditions can also affect your hike. Know your limitations.
- **Emergencies:** Even if you are headed out for just an hour, an injury, severe weather or a wrong turn could become life-threatening. That's why you must carry essential emergency gear like a map and compass, food, water, a flashlight, matches and a mobile phone with you.

Ski/Avalanche Safety

- Check for avalanche danger before heading to the mountains.
- Take an avalanche safety course.
- Always wear a ski helmet. A 2002 study showed helmets reduce the risk of head injury in a ski or snowboard crash by 60%.⁵
- Don't ski "out-of-bounds."